

Mitchell Livingston WerBell III

In His Armed Camp, He Awaits Terror's Reign

Mitchell Livingston WerBell III is sitting in his office talking on his red telephone:

"Hey, how are things in Anchorage? . . . I'm having our Washington boys come in . . . We'll prepare a full report just to have on hand . . . One fella, Dick, is a helluva technician . . . Did all that stuff in Vietnam. He was working for the agency then . . . We can prepare an outline I think will stand up under any kind of scrutiny."

Who knows the intrigue that WerBell has seen? "Anchorage . . . Washington boys . . . full report . . . helluva of a technician . . . the agency" is jargon bristled with hints of military and political machinations. At age 60, working from a combination home and armed camp in Powder Springs, Ga., WerBell is among the last of the swashbucklers, a diminutive man who sells arms to the world, who seems to be always nearby when a palace revolution is scheduled.

"I have very heavy intelligence that America is in line for terrorism, and I think we're not prepared," gripes WerBell. "I think we're in mortal danger."

WerBell won't be specific about his sources. In fact he's rarely specific about much of his life. His role, if any, in an invasion of Haiti in 1966 is unclear; a former OSS officer, he denies that he works for the CIA. He once told a reporter that he sometimes advises foreign governments on behalf of "an independent group of well-intentioned, patriotic Americans" he prefers not to name.

Today WerBell rests on the reputation he made in paramilitary circles with an engineer named Gordon Ingram. They are the inventors of the small, silent, deadly Ingram Model 11, a repeating handgun with an efficient silencer. Ingram designed the gun, WerBell fashioned the silencer.

"Often, the loudest noise is when the bullet hits home," WerBell boasts. "If it hits a human, it makes a peculiar, thunking sound, like hitting a watermelon."

With the end of the American presence in Vietnam, WerBell is branching into other businesses. A company called Brigade Quartermaster sells British military "softgoods" such as blankets and uniforms. This year he has formed International Investigative Association, to provide "high-level counterespionage" capabilities as well as a "VIP Protection" service WerBell hopes will rival Intertel, a Washington-based firm whose employees are largely ex-FBI, IRS and CIA agents.

A fervent anti-Communist, WerBell sells neither his weapons nor his services to any country of which the U.S. disapproves. Still, he's

hardly a favorite person in some government circles, often blasting Jimmy Carter with telegrams and sending copies all over town. WerBell says the State Department has chastised him for meddling too much in international affairs.

From his home an hour's drive north of Atlanta, WerBell can survey his acreage, guarded by roaming attack dogs and an electric fence at the driveway that begins near his lake.

What, he is asked, if someone evades the obstacles by swimming the lake? WerBell smiles and with the tip of his Dunhill Monterrey points to an arsenal of rifles that graces his office wall.

As the decline of America approaches, Mitchell Livingston WerBell III is prepared.